Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

It was a small comet with a period of 6.6 years and its orbit came within a few thousand miles of that of the earth. If they had ever arrived simultaneously at the point of least distance, the earth would have passed through the outer portion of the comet's head. But the comet failed to last long enough. On its third return in 1846, the comet divided into two parts while in full view. When the parts were seen again in 1852 they were about 1,500,000 miles from each other. Since then they have not been seen though they should have reappeared no less than eight times. On the night of Nov. 27, 1872, while the earth was passing the path of the old comet, she encountered a magnificent display of meteors. Similar displays were seen at the usual period of the passage of the comet, in 1885 and 1892.

Of course the nuclei of a comet cannot be solid, for they expand and contract by many thousands of miles. But if the earth were bombarded by the combined energy of the meteors forming the head no living being could survive the ensuing rise in temperature. The ruin would be far greater if there were a head on collision. This would simply mean the end of the world as far as the human race is concerned.

This is bound to happen, sometime, if the earth lasts long enough and comets do not become extinct. But what are the chances? Arago figured out that the chance of any individual comet striking the earth is as 1 to 281,000,000. But all this is nothing to worry about. It takes infinitely less to snuff out the candle of our life than a collision between the earth and a comet. Science tells us that the end of the world as the abode of life is surely coming—and this is infinitely more certain than that the earth will ever be in collision with a comet.

OUTBURST OF THE PEAK OF TENERIFFE

A volcanic eruption of the Peak of Teneriffe began on Nov. 18 last and continued for several days. The world had almost forgotten that this lofty mountain in the Canary Islands, whose summit is often covered with snow, is an active volcano. Many had believed that its fire were almost extinct. Some evidence of life remained, however, for its crater has often given feeble testimony to this fact. But the history of the Peak shows, just as the records of Vesuvius and Cameroon Mountain have shown, that the complete subsidence of great volcanic forces cannot be inferred from the fact that long periods of time have separated the several eruptions. Large trees were said to be growing in the crater of Vesuvius when the outburst occurred that buried Pompeii; and the great eruptions of the Peak of Teneriffe, since man began to count them, have been about a century apart.

Mr. John S. Fleet writes in the *Geographical Journal* (Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 59-61) that the people of Teneriffe were somewhat alarmed for some months, last year, before the outburst, by the unusual frequency of small earthquake shocks. Earth tremors, on some days, were continuous for hours. They were felt most on the northwest side of the island near Icod and to a lesser extent, at La Orotava. Finally, on the afternoon of Nov. 18, the residents of La Orotava heard detonations, like the discharge of heavy cannon, at intervals of a minute or less. Tidings soon came that an eruption had occurred near Garachico where the long, northwestern flank of the mountain descends to the sea. Smoke could be seen rising over the intervening hills, the noise of the explosions was heard all night and, in the darkness, the glow of the red-hot lava was reflected on the clouds.

> Next day it became clear that the eruption was really in the vicinity of Santiago, which stands 6 miles west-north-west of the peak. A stream of lava about a half mile wide and 8 feet deep was slowly travelling down the valley towards the village. Thereafter reports arrived that another lava flow was proceeding in a northerly direction towards El Tanque, which lies about 2 miles from Garachico. The rate of advance is variably stated but it must have depended largely on the slope and configuration of the ground.

The length of the lava stream flowing towards Santiago is said to have been about 3¾ miles and it advanced about a half mile in 24 hours. Santiago was not invaded and the stream descending towards El Tanque also came to rest.

Later reports say that the eruption took place on level ground not far from Chahorra which is a large crater to the west of the main summit at an elevation of 10,500 feet. The craters from which the November outpouring of lava came are on a fissure running 15° north of west, at an elevation of only 3,482 feet. Many parties have visited the scene of the eruption and have found it easy to get within 400 feet of the craters. The wind, during the early part of the outburst, was persistently from the south and a cone of volcanic ash, 400 to 500 feet high was formed. Clouds of steam and showers of stone were still being projected into the air, but the lava flow seems to have continued only a few days and had nearly ceased on Nov. 26.

The main facts, in brief, are that a new fissure opened low down on the northwest quadrant of the volcano and that the large amount of lava emitted from it took its natural course down the valley towards the sea. All the other parts of the island were protected from the lava flow by the ring-like crater wall that girdles the base of the mountain. There was no loss of life.

Very likely, nothing more of importance will be heard of Teneriffe as a volcano for a long time to come. The island is so accessible that expert students of volcanic phenomena are almost certain to visit Teneriffe to investigate the latest great outburst. It is fortunate, for purposes of comparison, that the series of volcanic eruptions in the islands of the Canary group, including Teneriffe, in the years 1730-36, was made the subject of extended observation by Leopold von Buch and that he recorded the results, at length, in his classical work, "Physikalische Beschreibung der Canarischen Inseln."

The last previous great lava flow from the Peak of Teneriffe occurred in 1798, 111 years earlier. Chahorra was the active center having superseded the summit crater. Nearly a century earlier, in 1706, a great lava flow destroyed the town of Garachico which stands on the coast, about 7 miles northwest of Chahorra.

The only report we have of an eruption, that evidently occurred in 1492, is a mere mention made by Columbus in his day book, when he was on his first journey to America. He wrote that on the nights of August 21-25 "We saw a great fire springing out of the Mountain of Teneriffe."

THE PARKER EXPEDITION TO MT. McKINLEY*

BY

BELMORE BROWNE

As far as our plans were concerned, the pack horse method of approaching Mt. McKinley from the west and north was eliminated by the failure of the earlier efforts in this direction. We also found that a pack train attack from the Tanana side was out of the question on account of the length of time required. We then had to choose between the winter approach with dog teams, and the southern, or motor boat route.

---

* Professor Herschel C. Parker, adjunct professor of Physics in Columbia University, Mr. J. H. Cuntz of the Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken, Mr. Belmore Browne, the mountaineer and writer, and Mr. Herman L. Tucker, of the U. S. Forest Service, left New York late in April for Seattle, whence they will sail for Alaska to attempt the ascent of Mt. McKinley and the survey and mapping of a part of the mountain region around it.